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JACK SNIPE *LYMNOCRYPTES MINIMUS*, COMMON SNIPE *GALLINAGO GALLINAGO* AND BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER *LIMICOLA FALCINELLUS* AT NDOLA, ZAMBIA

The purpose of this note is to document my Ndola records of three waders species which are rarely recorded in Zambia. No details of these records have appeared elsewhere, but mention was made in Taylor (1980) of the occurrence of the two snipe species at Ndola.

*Lymnocyptes minimus* Jack Snipe

I recorded this species on two occasions at Itawa swamps, Ndola (12.57'S, 28.47'E). One was flushed by my dog from short tussocky grass and mud on 6 March 1979, and one was seen standing on a muddy track in short wet grass on 4 February 1980. Both sightings were in the early morning. The birds were identified by their small size, short bills, bold pale lines on the back, graduated all-brown tails, mottled flanks, short legs, lack of pale central crown streak, and their flight. Great Snipe *Gallinago media* and African Snipe *G. nigripennis* were also present on both occasions, and in 1979 Common Snipe *G. gallinago* was also present for comparison. Full details of both records are on file at the Zoological Museum, Tring, England.

There is only one other record of the Jack Snipe from Zambia, that of one at Mwinilunga (11.44'S, 24.26'E) on 26 October 1946 (Benson *et al.* 1971). However, two were recorded as having been shot at Itawa on 31 December 1973 by the late Dr F.W. Gilbert, a keen wildfowler who had also shot this species in the UK (P. Gilbert *in litt.*). Although no details were preserved, this record would seem to be acceptable on the basis of Dr Gilbert's experience of snipe in Zambia and the UK. The Itawa records are the most southerly for the species in Africa.

*Gallinago gallinago* Common Snipe

One was present at Itawa on 3 March 1978, and one from 26 February 1979 to at least 9 March 1979, with at least two on 6 March 1979. Great and African Snipe were also present for comparison. The Common Snipe were identified using the criteria given in Taylor (1980); this paper also gives details of the habitat occupied by all three species. Benson *et al.* (1971) did not accept the occurrence of this species in Zambia, but Button (1973) showed that this snipe has reached Zambia in small numbers in several years (the latest year mentioned is 1964) and that in the early 1940s it was not uncommon at Itawa. It may be of regular occurrence in Zambia, and is probably overlooked, but my intensive observations at Itawa from 1975 to 1980 produced only the 1978 and 1979 sightings given above, so the bird's status at Ndola appears to have changed considerably in the last 40 years. The 1979 records were at the time of the greatest abundance of the other *Gallinago* species at Itawa.

*Limicola falcinellus* Broad-billed Sandpiper

One was at Kanini Sewage Works, Ndola (12.59'S, 28.38'E) on 21 October 1979, at a time of increased wader numbers following heavy storms on the previous day. The bird fed alongside Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea* and other species. It was identified by its size (smaller than

*C. ferruginea* but larger than *C. minuta*), short legs, long bill drooping at the tip, grey upperparts with pale feather edges, dark carpal joint area, streaked breast, double eyestripe, indistinct pale wingbar, and dark tail and rump with whitish sides. It was also seen by C. Carter, who agrees with the identification (pers. comm.). A full description is on file at the Zoological Museum, Tring.

This is the second record of this species from Zambia, the first being of one at Mufulira (12.34'S, 28.16'E) on 1 and 2 November 1975 (Robinson 1976).

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UNREPORTED HUNTING BEHAVIOUR OF THE MADAGASCAR MALACHITE KINGFISHER  
<sup>1</sup>*CORYTHORNIS VINTSIOIDES* ON GRAND COMORO

The Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher is a regular, but not a common bird on Grand Comoro. Benson (1960) found it "only in the north of the island, at tree-fringed pools on the coast and at the Mitsamiouli crater-lake" and Forbes-Watson (1969) saw three on the coast and one "at c. 1,000 feet a.s.l." (i.e. about 2500 m from the coast) during a six-day stay. On the three other Comoro islands it is much more common and is also found inland, where it occurs along fresh water, which is lacking totally on Grand Comoro, a volcanic island without permanent rivers (Benson 1960).

Benson (1960) records as stomach contents on the Comoros, insects and, in three specimens, crustaceans. Milon, Petter & Randrianasolo (1973) state that in Madagascar the nominate race occurs along fresh waters but also along the coast in the northwest, although this pertains probably to mangroves (see Schlegel & Pollen 1868).

During a stay of about a month on Grand Comoro in July and August 1981 we met with the species twice in mangroves (once at Hahaia and once at Ourouvéni, in the north). However, it was also seen in dry vegetation twice by R. Potvliege (pers. comm.) near Droudé (a coastal village) and we observed one bird perched in a baobab at Dzahadjou (in the south about 2 km from the coast). Our final observation of the species near M'bachilé at the coast (11.45'S, 43.13'E) enabled us to witness an undescribed method of prey-catching.

At low water level a steep cliff about 3 m high is apparent in this locality and, along narrow ridges in the wall of this cliff, large numbers of small crabs were hiding. The kingfisher was first seen sitting on some rocks which emerged from the sea about 10 m away. It then made a short flight towards the cliff and quickly snatched a small crab from a hiding place. It immediately returned to its perch on the rocks and then made another flight towards the cliff a little later, after which it returned again to the perch. On our approach it flew away. To our knowledge this method of hunting has not been reported before in *Corythornis vintsioides*.

We thank C.H. Fry for commenting on our observation.

<sup>1</sup>We follow the nomenclature of Fry (1980)